

Outlines Immediate Benefits of Reform for Broome County Residents

Binghamton, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today held a rally to celebrate the historic passage and signing into law of comprehensive health care reform. Many of the measure's provisions will take effect this year, helping upstate families, small business owners, seniors and young people with more affordable health care choices and new rules to hold insurance companies accountable.

"This is a historic victory for the upstate New Yorkers who have for far too long struggled with the growing cost of health care and insurance company abuses," Hinchey said.

"Comprehensive health care reform that provides high quality, affordable insurance options to every American was long overdue. This year, families, small businesses, seniors and young people throughout the Southern Tier will begin to see the relief they so desperately need."

Hinchey outline several of the immediate benefits for upstate New Yorkers in his Congressional district, including:

- Tax Credits for Small Businesses of up to 35% of the cost of premiums available immediately, helping 15,100 firms provide coverage.
- Improved Medicare Coverage for 109,000 Beneficiaries with a \$250 rebate for those who hit the "donut hole" prescription drug coverage gap and eliminated co-pays for preventative care.
- Help for the Uninsured, including immediate access to a high-risk pool for 10,900 individuals with pre-existing conditions.
- No Discrimination Against Children - as a result of this law, children with pre-existing conditions will no longer be denied coverage. Beginning in 2014 the provision would apply to all persons.

- Immediate Coverage for Young People who will now be allowed to stay on their parents insurance until their 26th birthday.

- Protections from Insurance Company Fine Print, including an end to the practice of rescission, whereby insurance companies drop people when they get sick, and a ban on lifetime limits and annual limits on coverage.

Hinchey also noted that while the measure represents a major step forward, it still does not accomplish everything that is needed to improve the delivery of health care. For instance, the law lacks a provision that would allow Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for bulk discount deals, which could save taxpayers up to \$156 billion over ten years. To address that and other issues, the Congressman will continue working for additional legislation that further improves the quality of Medicare and makes health care more comprehensive, accessible and affordable for all Americans.